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Let's scare the kids

Anna Kendrick takes on the role of Cinderella in "Into the Woods," the splashy movie of Stephen Sondheim's fairy tale mash-up musical. / GETTY IMAGES

#### PBA chief goaded by re-election plans

#### A wet Christmas may delay travelers

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# Behind PBA chief's war of words, a re-election

**Politics.** Police union chief Lynch faces reelection in 2015.

The man leading the charge against Mayor Bill de Blasio and his response to the murders of two police officers is up for reelection — a detail that has not gone unnoticed by law-makers, City Hall insiders tell Metro.

Patrick Lynch, the fourterm president of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, is again poised to win uncontested leadership of the city's largest law enforcement union, even as the group has gone without a contract since 2010 and tensions with lawmakers are at a new high.

No one Metro spoke with questioned Lynch's commitment to his 24,000 members. Still, sources in City Hall told Metro Lynch's re-election bid had been a subject of discussion long before the Dec. 20 murders of NYPD officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos in Brooklyn.

Even before tensions between the PBA and City Hall escalated after a Staten Island grand jury decided not to indict Officer Daniel Pantaleo in Eric Garner's death, leaders of other police unions had a better position for negotiating on police reforms with City Hall, a senior City Council staffer told Metro.

The relationship between Mayor Bill de Blasio and the police union only worsened after Liu and Ramos were killed.

Lynch was among the cops who turned their



backs on de Blasio in Woodhull Hospital after Liu and Ramos died, almost immediately accusing de Blasio and protesters of creating an environment that led to the cop killings.

"That blood on the hands starts on the steps of City Hall, in the office of the mayor," Lynch said, earning approval from peers months ahead of the election next spring.

"Lynch's response is so emotional that you have to wonder if he put selfinterest aside," said Kenneth Sherrill, an emeritus political science professor at Hunter College.

"If you're very cynical, you could believe he did it to distract members," Sher-



Visit Metro.us for daily coverage of New York's police crisis.

rill added, "But the grief was so bad, he couldn't hold back."

Lynch was first elected in 1999 during the Giuliani administration as a beat cop in Williamsburg. Locking horns at one

Locking horns at one point or another with Mayors Rudy Giuliani, Mike Bloomberg and now de Bla-

#### Quoted

"If you're very cynical, you could believe he did it to distract members. But the grief was so bad, he couldn't hold back." sherrill

sio, Lynch won the last two PBA elections in 2011 and in 2007 unopposed.

The lack of a contract between the PBA and the city remains one of the biggest battles since Bloomberg's final term and now de Blasio's first.

In August, the union entered into arbitration with

the administration while releasing major ad campaigns asking, "When will our city support us?"

A spokesman for the PBA did not respond to Metro's requests for comment, but Bloomberg News reported on Tuesday that Lynch faces no opposition in the upcoming election.

It's unlikely a peacemaker will emerge to challenge Lynch now, said Sherrill. "A challenger saying he'll be nicer to the mayor can't get a candidate very far."

Any challenge to Lynch would have to be based on his record, and Lynch's record of support for his members is clear, said John Jay professor and retired NYPD detective Joseph Giacalone.

Giacalone pointed to de Blasio's record on police matters ranging from his support of a settlement for the Central Park Five case to his response to former City Hall aide Rachel Noerdlinger's relationship with man who once called police "pigs" on Facebook.

"Everyone starts to get riled up to show they are there for their members," Giacalone said.

Regardless of Lynch's motivations or even if he wins for a fifth time next year, Sherrill said PBA members do and will have to learn to work with de Blasio — at least until the 2017 mayoral elections and perhaps

The question remains, he said: "What is the PBA going to do to regain the mayor's confidence?"





# City Council. Mark-Viverito condemns officer assassinations, undecided on funeral

Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito appeared to be caught in a cease-fire between City Hall and the police unions that have been critical of elected officials since NYPD Officer Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos were gunned down in Brooklyn on Saturday. Mark-Viverito echoed Mayor Bill de Blasio's call to unite as a city and for protesters to stop demonstrating until Liu and Ramos are buried. But she did not blast the media, as de Blasio did Monday, blaming them for dividing the police and City Hall over recent protests.

"Now is not the time for divisiveness. Now is not a time for animosity," Mark-Viverito said. "Now is the time to mourn."

Just days before the officers were killed, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association circulated a petition for officers to sign banning de Blasio and Mark-Viverito from their funerals.

The mayor said Monday he'd attend the services, while Mark-Viverito said Tuesday she would "respect the family's wishes" with regard to her attendance



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#### Grimm pleads guilty, says he'll stay in office

Rep. Michael Grimm faces up to three years in prison on federal tax charges when he's sentenced in June. He pleaded quilty Tuesday.

"As long as I'm able to serve, I'm going to," Grimm said.

He's accused of hiding more than \$1 million, as well as hiring undocumented workers and paying employees off the books.

A spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner said he needs to speak to Grimm before deciding on Grimm's ability to serve.



# Elderly New Yorkers receive meals, songs, from youth

#### Holiday cheer.

Carolers from Trinity Church's Youth Choir bring meals to shut in seniors

Singers from Trinity Church's Youth Chorus delivered hot meals, poinsettias, stockings and songs to residents living at a Midtown senior home on Tuesday morning.

Catalina Linero, 75, sat on her bed in a small studio at Encore Community Services, smiling as the group of carolers in Santa hats sang "Oh Holy Night," then left her with meals for the day.

Linero is one of 19 residents at the home who relies on Citymeals-on-Wheels for food daily. The charity, founded in 1981, has delivered 50 million



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meals, and serves 18,000 New Yorkers.

"That's very good,"

said Thomas Pointek, 70, a Navy veteran, after the singers finished "Deck the Halls." "It sounds like on the TV"

"One of my relatives is in the hospital, so to me this is actually such a wonderful opportunity to spiritually empower all the people here and bring them joy going into the holiday season," said Allison Zhao, 18, a freshman at the University of Richmond.

"The choir means a lot to me, and I feel it's a way to give back," said Elisa Sikula, a 14-year-old student at Notre Dame High School.

"This is really moving," said Katie Kruse, 14, a student at the Dalton School.

"The holidays are a particularly difficult time (for seniors). They've outlived their family, friends, sometimes their own children, and they're alone," said Beth Shapiro, executive director of Citymeals.

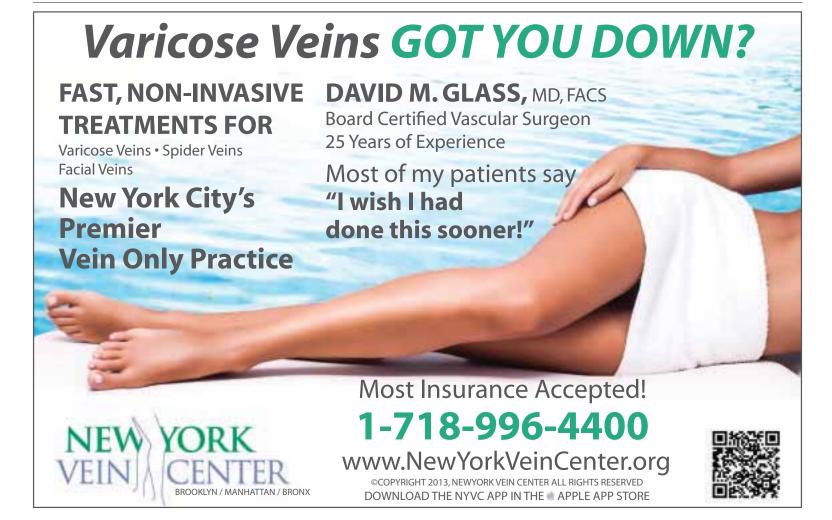
"It is about the food but it's also about our staff and volunteers who check in every day, and make sure that there's a human connection, that we battle a lit bit of the social isolation."



WENDY JOAN
BIDDLECOMBE
Wendy.Biddlecombe@metro.

#### Fallen officers' mortgages covered

The Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, which supports first responders, has pledged to help the families of NYPD Officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos purchase their homes. "When my brother Stephen died on 9/11 along with 342 other firefighters, our family decided that the best way to honor his memory was by supporting first responders," said Frank Siller, its chairman. "It's fitting that in recognition of the sacrifice of these fallen officers, we ensure that their family homes are financially secure."



Two airplanes got too close for comfort on Tuesday when a departing Southwest Airlines plane had a wing clipped by an arriving American Airlines plane at La Guardia Airport. No injuries were reported, and authorities said operations at the airport weren't interrupted. TWITTER, @ARI\_BE\_FREE

#### Airport mishap

#### A wet Christmas

An airliner got its wing clipped in a gentle collision with another plane at LaGuardia Airport Tuesday, further delaying flights.

New Yorkers can expect fog and wet weather, and likely travel delays, to continue through Christmas Day.

John Murray, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service, said forecasts are showing wet and mild weather for the holidays, with temperatures rising to the upper

"Our aviation forecast shows low conditions that will hamper, slow down travel," Murray said.

New York City could see up to two inches of rain through Thursday.

Areas of fog are expected Wednesday morning, with winds up to 15 mph in the afternoon. Rains will continue through the night, with the possibility of gusty winds and thunderstorms.

Rain is expected for Christmas morning on Thursday, but clouds will clear in the afternoon to partly-sunny skies.



Gunrunner

#### **Former Delta** employee accused of smuggling guns on flights

A Brooklyn man was charged with using his access to Delta Airline's operations at Kennedy Airport to smuggle 153 firearms and ammunition from Atlanta on

17 separate flights this year, Brooklyn D.A. Ken Thompson and NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton said Tuesday.

Mark Henry, 45, of Brooklyn and Georgia, is being held without bail. Three others were also indicted in the scheme.

Henry's mother is a retired Delta employee, and investigators said he used her flying privileges to make the trips and escape close scrutiny. Henry worked as a ramp agent for the company from 2007 to 2010, and relied on another ramp agent, Eugene Harvey, to let him bypass security with a carry-on bag that he used to get the guns, including AK-47s and handguns, on the flights.

The D.A.'s office said defendants Ernest Leneau and Adrian Alleyne sold the guns smuggled by

Henry to an undercover detective in Brooklyn, and defendant Grayling Smith purchased guns from Henry.

The four face more than 600 charges including: conspiracy, manufacture, transport, disposition and defacement of weapons, criminal possession of a weapon and criminal sale of a firearm, prosecutors said.





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# Chasing away the holiday blues

**Traditions.** Fighting loneliness is the top priority.

The year's end may bring holiday cheer for many, but it can cause sadness and unhealthy behavior in others.

"People tend to picture the holidays as being perfect, like a Norman Rockwell painting," says Dr. Stephen Geisler, a psychiatrist at Zucker Hillside Hospital in Queens. The problem comes when people expect reality to reach that ideal.

One common holiday-related problem is loneliness. "It's usually a time of year that emphasizes family," says Dr. Michael Henry, a psychiatrist based at Massachusetts General Hospital. "There are some people estranged from their families, or who have lost family members or given current economic cir-



cumstances, they are unable to travel to see their families."

There are ways to feel less alone.

"The challenge is to create new traditions," Geisler advises. "If your family is out of town, make plans to spend the holidays with friends, or go to a soup kitchen and volunteer."

Economic concerns can also contribute to feeling low, causing people to beat themselves up for not being able to afford the perfect gift." People tell themselves, 'If I were better, I'd be able to afford this," said Henry. Other seasonal prob-

Other seasonal problems include excessive eating and alcohol abuse, something to keep in mind as you make plans for New Year's Eve.

The approach of a new year can also cause

Debunked

#### Suicide myth

It's a myth that the suicide rate goes up during the holiday season.

Since 1999, the Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania has issued a study on newspaper stories perpetuating the myth. They say that during the 2013 holiday season, 70

percent of the stories incorrectly stated that suicide rates rose at the end of the year. In truth, the period between November and January usually has one of the lowest suicide rates of the year, according to the CDC.

The months between April and August tend to have the highest suicide rates.

#### Quote

"The challenge is to create new traditions. ... Volunteer at a soup kitchen."

Geisler

people to reflect on the failures of the previous 12 months.

"The problem people have with New Year's is often they did not keep their resolutions," Geisler said. "They did not lose that 20 pounds."

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tions involving reachable goals, said Geisler. He also encourages people to pace themselves. "You can't do it all," said Geisler.

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# CULTURE

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# Anna Kendrick: Why kids need to embrace the darker side of life

**Exclusive.** The "Into the Woods" star thinks kids can handle a lot more than we assume.

In "Into the Woods," Anna Kendrick plays Cinderella, though it might not exactly be the Cinderella you're familiar with. Stephen Sondheim's hit musical takes the much darker original versions of popular fairy tales and adds a post-modern twist, leaving the Disney versions spinning in its wake which is surprising, since Disney produced the movie adaptation. So, this darker, more irony-fueled take on things: totally not for kids, right? Kendrick would beg to differ.

It seems funny that

#### Disney would be handling this musical, considering its take on fairy tales.

I know. It's cool that they did this. I think it's smart because for another studio to do it, it would've felt like some kind of attack or something.

#### As this film shows, fairy tales used to be much, much darker.

I think that children are intrigued by the dark side of fairy tales. They always want to peer through their fingers and see the ugly bits, and I think that's something very smart that happens in this movie. Some of it is shiny and fun, and then there's little twists on things that kind of excite you. I think we all have movies that we saw when we were young, like "Watership Down" or "Flight of the Navigator" or "Labyrinth" - all these weird movies that left



such an impression on us because it was engaging our little brains in a way we weren't used to.

#### Adults tend to develop an unrealistic idea of what kids can and can't handle.

Yeah, completely. My brother showed me "Pulp Fiction" when I was about 10 and I turned out all right, for the most part.

#### What was your favorite part of "Pulp Fiction" when you first saw it?

The dancing. And I did like when they stabbed Uma Thurman with the adrenaline needle. ... Even at that age, I remember the smash cut to her in the car looking all f-ed up. I didn't understand why, but I was like, "That makes me laugh. Something terrible happened, and now something funny is happening." So there is that part of kids' brains that are really compelled by darkness

#### And we should obviously encourage that.

Yeah. No heroin use in this film, though. Just for the record, in case there are any parents reading.

There are a few notable changes from the original "Into the Woods," and Sondheim has some diehard fans. How do you gird yourself for their reactions?

That's a tough one because all you can ever do is hope that the attitude that they take is, "Well, you should see the show because the show is different and exciting as well."... Hopefully this just exposes people to the piece and gets them excited about more live

ANNA KENDRICK



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# **Q&A** Sienna Miller returns to the spotlight

#### Interview.

After laving low. the actress is stormina movies. including the new "American Sniper."

When she was younger, Sienna Miller was a paparazzi magnet. She seems to have taken drastic steps to distance herself these days. In 2012 she gave birth to her daughter, Marlowe, with her now-fiance Tom Sturridge, and regularly describes their life as "boring." But she's also back in high-profile movies, after years in smaller fare. She was in "Foxcatcher," and now plays Taya Kyle, wife of late Army sharpshooter Chris Kyle (played by Bradley Cooper) in Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper." And there's plenty more coming soon.

#### In real life Taya is very animated. She's definitely not just The Wife.

She's a real firecracker. She's definitely not just a military wife. Clint, I think, is so respectful of women and historically has made movies with great roles for women in them. But it's not her story; it's Chris's story. You try to pack a lot into these small, infrequent moments that served the

You have a ton of movies in the works: the Whitey Bulger film "Black Mass," Ben Affleck's "Live by Night," another Bradley **Cooper movie and James** Gray's "The Lost City of

Female troubles

#### Same old. same old

There has been a lot of talk recently about the lack of female-driven movies in Hollywood. Is



I made a pact after I had a baby that I wanted to work with the best people. I don't care about the size of the roles; I just want to be in great films, just to learn from these people. Ten weeks after I gave birth to my daughter I was sent "Foxcatcher." And once that happened it opened up opportunities with other filmmakers, because they would tell other directors what I was like to

"I TRY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO TAKE VANITY OUT OF THE EQUATION, WITH ANY ROLE.

EVEN IF IT'S A SUPER-GLAMOROUS ONE," SAYS SIENNA MILLER, / FILMMAGI

work with. It was quite a good strategy, actually.

#### How have you juggled motherhood with so much work?

For her first year, I basically didn't work. Now she comes with me. She's here right now, sleeping in the hotel. She's like a little nomad. She gets to be with her mom and dad and we take turns working. What a great life, to be around creative people and funny environments.

#### In real life you don't look much like you do in 'American Sniper."

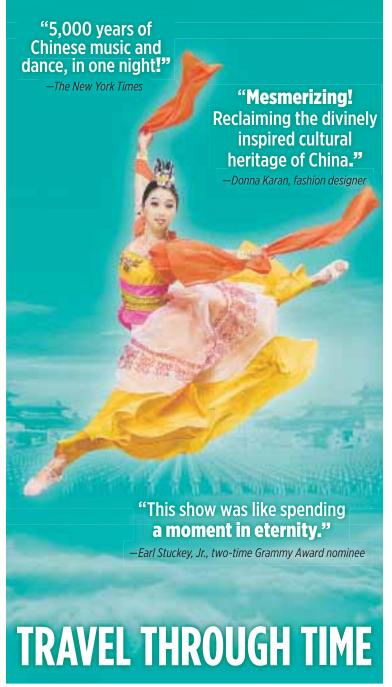
I try as much as possible to take vanity out of the equation, with any role, even if it's a super-glamorous one. An actor's job is to inhabit and disappear. That's my goal. My dad didn't recognize me in this for the first couple minutes [laughs], which is really worrying-slashflattering.



#### it getting better at all? No. I think there's still no

equality in Hollywood whatsoever. In terms of roles and quality of roles and paychecks, that world is really imbalanced. At

the moment, I'm fortunate enough to work with directors who love women and get to play some really interesting, even if they're small, but really interesting, great characters.



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# Spend Christmas at the movies

#### Review



#### 'Big Eyes'

• • • • •

"Big Eyes" tells the crazy story of Margaret Keane (Amy Adams), a painter whose husband, Walter (Christoph Waltz), took credit for her immensely popular works, which featured sad children with giant eyes.

The film is a tale of suffering at the hands of a monster who traded in mental abuse. But the tone is somehow broad even at its most serious. As directed by Tim Burton — reuniting with his "Ed Wood" writers — it's a loud-colored and sometimes just plain loud drama with the camp that some modern

audiences see in the hyper-stylized melodramas of Douglas Sirk.

Adams is her usual withdrawn self, deflating quietly as she lets a swaggering man walk all over her. Everyone else is a cartoon playing to the rafters. The mass market quality of Margaret's paintings obscures to the cognoscenti the artistry that went into it. Meanwhile, here's a film by one of the world's most popular filmmakers, who himself has turned a special kind of gloom into a commodity. Much of "Big Eyes" is broad to a fault — if anchored by Adams' delicate turn but underneath the angst is another level of equal turmoil. MATT PRIGGE

#### Musical. You just need to stay for the first half

Stephen Sondheim's fairy tale mash-up becomes the latest movie musical extravaganza, with a pile of familiar characters — Cinderella (Anna Kendrick), her prince (Chris Pine) and an all-purpose witch (Meryl Streep) — hanging out together in the same town.

The lowdown Along with "Sweeney Todd," "Into the Woods" is Stephen Sondheim's most audiencefriendly work - until the second half comes around. The tonal shift is the kind of thing that requires a deft hand, which director Rob Marshall does not possess. It's a broad movie that turns overly serious. Unlike Marshall's previous musical movies — the undeserved Oscar-gobbler "Chicago" and the Fellini fiasco "Nine" — it's periodically saved by some excellent performances, chief among them



Emily Blunt as the wonderfully expressive wife of the Baker (James Corden).

Back to the second half, which is more of a bloodbath than the show itself, finds characters, likable and not, being offed by a vengeful giant hunting for beanstalk-climbing Jack (Daniel Huttlestone). So much is hacked that the shift to a more nakedly emotional tone feels unsupported, and the whole thing crawls to a limp finish. One character who makes it is the pedo wolf (Johnny Depp) who lusts for the nubile flesh of Red Riding Hood (14-year-old Lilla Crawford). The

rest is spotty, though the film nails one number: "Agony," in which studly princes Pine and Billy Magnussen rip open a shirt button every time the chorus comes around. For two minutes the production, impossible to hate or much like, seems worth it.

# Remake. Mark Wahlberg leads an angry and sarcastic redo of a '70s gutter drama

A somewhat obscure '70s great, starring James Caan, becomes a still very funny drama about a professor (Mark Wahlberg) who gambles his way into deep debt with three people he shouldn't be in debt to, including a frequently shirtless John Goodman.

The lowdown Despite what purists say, the less faithful a movie remake, the better it may be. There's no point in straight-up redoing a film that already exists, much like there's little reason to bother with a song cover that sounds just like the original. That said, it's possible that this new "The Gambler" goes too far. The original understood the gambling dilemma: Winning could never make him happy. The only time he felt alive was when he was betting. Wahlberg's Jim Bennett, by contrast, isn't really a gambler. He simply uses high-stakes



gambling to get at his real pursuit, destroying his life so that, should he still be alive afterwards, he can build himself anew.

What saves this from being sentimental is its a—hole attitude. Screenwriter William Monahan ("The Departed") is a peerless writer of sharp-witted insults and miserable utterances, which Wahlberg — not always the most articulate of actors — knows how to rattle off. Wahlberg's Jim is pitiless and hate-filled, never once begging for viewer sympathy but wildly charismatic nonetheless. Director Rupert Wyatt ("Rise of the Planet of the Apes") matches Mo-

'The Gambler'

Director: Rupert Wyatt

Stars: Mark Wahlberg,
Brie Larson

Rating: R

nahan's nervous, sarcastic energy, keeping things revved-up but sometimes goofy, but the real star isn't Wahlberg or Wyatt: it's Monahan. Sloppy as it gets, this "Gambler" is still a Hollywood product that features a lead who may be working toward his own destruction — as well as one that burns five minutes of screen time on its protagonist making fun of people who don't think William Shakespeare wrote the works of Ŵilliam Shakespeare.

MATT PRIGGE

#### Review



#### 'Unbroken'

• • • •

There are three movies in Angelina Jolie's "Unbroken," and you're bound to like at least one of them. One is a gruesomely sappy elegy to youth and America on the brink of World War II. The second is a nifty lifeboat picture — less the fantastical "Life of

Pi" than the grittier basics of Alfred Hitchcock's "Lifeboat." The third is a POW camp grinder, dragging us through the 2 ½ years its hero—real-life Olympianturned-soldier-turned-lifeboat-dweller-turned-prisoner Louie Zamperini (Jack O'Connell)—spent being beaten down and just plain beaten until the war ended.

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# Holiday movies that aim for the brain

#### 'Two Days, One Niaht'

Few artists are as reliably unchanging as Belgian social realists Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne ("Kid with a Bike"). What makes their latest effort slightly better? It's not just the presence of A-lister Marion Cotillard, as a woman who finds

that budget cuts have led to her bosses forcing her coworkers to make a choice: Lose her or their substantial annual bonuses. Her scrambling about expresses the directors' usual ethical and moral clarity. But there's also an emótional directness that's rare for them, even if it doesn't change up their peerless shtick.



#### Review

#### 'Leviathan'

Very, very loosely based on the Book of Job, Russia's entry for the foreign language film Oscar charts the almost comically miserable downfall of a hotheaded small towner (Aleksei Serebryakov) undone by a politician, his neglected wife, his city friend



and his own stupidity. None of this is happy, but director Andrey Zvyagintsev's approach is both clinical and darkly

funny, with segues into Kafkaesque humor and lengthy (and real) drinking scenes that recall John Cassavetes. MATT PRIGGE

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#### **History.** Martin Luther King Jr. scores one of the good biopics

Instead of a biopic that crams his life into two hours, this film about Martin Luther King Jr. zeroes in on a specific chapter: the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, with David Oyelowo as the civil rights leader and Tom Wilkinson as a combative Lyndon B. Johnson, who's irritated that King doesn't think the Civil Rights Act is enough.

The lowdown "Selma" is Hollywood's first Martin Luther King Jr. movie, but it doesn't feel like it. That's a good thing; the biopic has the tendency to smush complicated figures into bland blobs of greatness, turning thrilling lives into turgid history lessons teeming with half-truths, simplifications and generic inspirational pabulum. 'Selma" has its share of those, but it goes as light on them as one can and still qualify as Oscar bait. In fact, it's something trickier: a tough, sober, lived-in look at the grunt work of activism.

Indeed, one emerges



David Oyelowo steps into the shoes of Martin Luther King Jr. in "Selma," the first Hollywood film on his life. / PARAMOUNT PICTURES

from "Selma" appreciating not only King's spirit but his gifts for bald, sly, necessary political manipulation. What follows is closer to "No" — about the fight to unseat Augusto Pinochet — and "Lincoln," which concerned the battle to enact the 13th Amendment. Like those films' heroes, the good guys in "Selma" win because they know they can't effect change with mere nobility. The fight for voting rights is depicted

as a series of chess moves separated by discussion scenes, in which laidback but fiery activists sit in dimly lit rooms weighing the odds, debating tactics, planning the next step. This is a most practical docudrama, which is not to say it's not emotional. In fact, it's moving in large part because it's detached. Director Ava DuVernay trusts her viewers, and her film never comes off as a mere hunk of white liberal guilt. MATT PRIGGE

# War movie. With 'American Sniper,' Clint Eastwood offers his version of 'The Hurt Locker'

The memoirs of late army sharpshooter Chris Kyle come to the screen courtesy of Clint Eastwood, with Bradley Cooper as a good ol' boy who winds up raking in record kills in the aftermath of 9/11 - which takes a toll on his marriage and his psyche.

The lowdown Eastwood has spent much of his career deconstructing his onscreen persona and all the questionable business it represents. This makes him the perfect person to handle "American Sniper." This is a deeply, productively conflicted film. On one hand it's a celebration of the troops. But that's not the same as being a celebration of war, and it's definitely not the same as being an uncritical look at



what battle does to those who fight in them.

Like Eastwood's own "The Hurt Locker," it offers complex battles that rev up audience bloodlust – only to deny anyone the pleasure of clean kills. Picking off terrorists (and women and children) does awful things to Cooper's increasingly remote Kyle, and the film never lets you forget it. MATT PRIGGE

#### Review

'American Sniper'

Director: Clint Eastwood

Stars: Bradley Cooper. Sienna Miller

Rating: R



# **Theater.** Illusionary acts take center stage in this production.

Magic is having a moment, and nothing says it better than "The Illusionists" taking over the Marquis Theatre in Times Square during the holidays.

While the field of magic, as a whole, has been entering the public consciousness through televised spots on "America's Got Talent" and the newly popular "Wizard Wars" on Syfy, there's nothing that says "you've made it" quite like hitting Broadway.

Of course, you're not going to see anything horribly risque in a production like this one. It's geared toward appeasing

the masses, and it doesn't have a huge household name to carry the show. Instead, you get seven specialists from all over the world alternating acts that range from card tricks (including some astounding feats by Yu Ho-Jin, The Manipulator) to a Houdinilike underwater extrication (by Andrew Basso, The Escapologist).

The latter, along with a

compelling arrow-throughthe-apple stunt from Aaron Crow, The Warrior, are among the two flashiest acts. Adam Trent, The Futurist, also has a great bit featuring technology and a "touch screen" through which he does eye-defying disappearances. There are definitely memorable moments and ideas most ticket-holders won't have seen before. Getting those out to the public is an accom-



plishment that benefits everyone, as it advances the genre as a whole.

The downside is that there isn't a strong narrative to carry the show, so the tone varies widely. But it's fast-moving and a treat for all ages. It's common to hear audience members discussing who their favorite headliner was and which illusion delighted them the most – and these answers are always going

to differ. This show is perfect for anyone who isn't 100 percent sure how they feel about paying to see a magic show outside of Las Vegas; and that includes producers, who might hopefully see the appeal of bringing even bigger and better illusionary acts to center stage.

TRACIE MICHELLE MURPHY

A metronewyork
letters@ metro.us

#### Tour

## See it before it's too late

"The Illusionists" leaves town Jan. 4 for a national tour. With a little bit of something for everyone, it's sure to continue selling out shows throughout the U.S. But there's nothing quite like seeing the magic happen on Broadway.

#### Daily video

#### Could Harry and Marv actually have survived the 'Home Alone' movies?

"Home Alone," a beloved holiday classic, is basically a Looney Tunes cartoon come to life. But did it maybe give an entire generation unrealistic ideas about what kinds of injuries they could walk away from? This video shows a professional's take on what sort of harm actually befalls Harry (Joe Pesci) and Marv (Daniel Stern) in the film "Home Alone" and "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York." Just how many lives do they need to survive the doublefeature? Quite a few, as it turns out. NED EHRBAR





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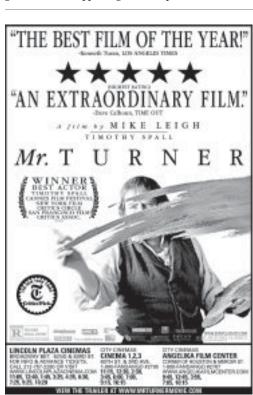
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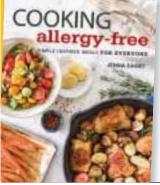
Tip

Add some color

#### **Recipe.** The Bloody **Mary Salad**

#### Ingredients

- ¾ cup finely chopped red
- 3 tablespoons sherry vinegar, divided
- 3 pints cherry tomatoes,
- 1 cup finely chopped celery hearts
- 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish (See ingredients note.)
- 1 tablespoon gluten-free Worcestershire sauce (See ingredients note.)
- ½ teaspoon celery seeds
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly around pepper
- Not all brands of horseradish and Worcestershire sauce are gluten-free, so check the



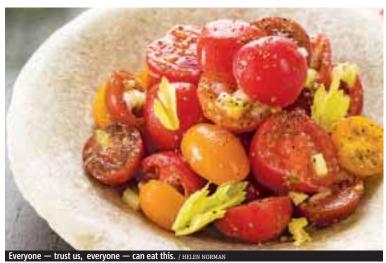
#### **Directions**

Put the onions in a large bowl and pour 1 tablespoon of the sherry vinegar on top; let the onions sit for about 10 minutes, then add the tomatoes and celery.

Whisk the remaining sherry

vinegar, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce and celery seeds in a medium bowl. Drizzle in the olive oil and whisk until emulsified. Pour the dressing on top of the tomato salad and toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside to marinate (the longer it sits, the more intense the flavor will be). Serve cold or at room temperature.

# What to serve your picky dinner guests



**Hosting.** Special diets don't have to make get-togethers frustrating.

many of How friends and family have restrictive dietary requirements? These days the answer is, probably many of them. Dairy-free, egg-free, nut-free, glutenfree and soy-free are just

Priciest

\$39M

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a handful of issues you might encounter trying to accommodate guests as you plan your menu. Whether your guests are keeping allergic reactions at bay, clinging to the latest fad diets or adhering to personal or religious beliefs, hosting a dinner party can turn out to be a major pain. So the question is, how do you cook a meal that is practically free of almost everything imaginable yet still wows

the crowd?

"Everyone deserves good food and dessert," says Jenna Short, owner Shortbreadnyc.com and the author of "Cooking Allergy-Free: Simple Inspired Meals for Everyone." See the recipe for her favorite crowd-pleasing appetizer, "The Bloody Mary Salad," above.

MOLLY CONGDON @ metronewyork

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ceilings, solid oak flooring,

The most expensive property to come on the market this week is a condo on the Upper East Side. Marketed by Douglas

Elliman, this four-bedroom, four-and-a-half bathroom, full floor penthouse features soaring 10 foot

oversized windows and a massive 2,440 square foot private wraparound terrace with southern and western exposures.

#### Cheapest

#### \$220K

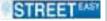
#### 2090 Madison Ave. #4D

The least expensive property to come onto the market this week is a restricted sale co-op located in Central Harlem. Marketed by Halstead Property, this property features two large bedrooms, oak wood floors, a dining alcove, separate kitchen and



abundant closet space. The building includes a private laundry room, four private parks and a live-in super.

StreetEasy.com is a New York based Real Estate information portal that aggregates the most comprehensive set of sale and rental listings along with other useful info.



#### **Spirited holiday.**

Count your glasses – those drinks could add up to a meal.

How many times have you heard the line, "A few drinks won't hurt"? Well, actually, they might, if you're watching calories. According to a new survey, 80 percent of wine and 60 percent of lager drinkers don't know how many calories they're consuming when they imbibe.

The Royal Society for Public Health, the British health body that published the findings, said that "Calorie content should be included with some urgency." They add: "The public's health is under threat from an obesity epidemic and harm caused by the irresponsible consumption of alcohol."

The reason that alcohol causes weight gain is because of its faster fat absorption, while its sugar content increases appetite.

The RSPH wants the European Commission to introduce calorie labeling for alcoholic drinks, as it "would help further

# Drunk on calories



support the public to make informed choices about their alcohol consumption and, ultimately, moderate their drinking."

French nutritionist Dr. Larry Dibo-Cohen explains, "It's a fact that alcohol contains a lot of calories.

"People watching their weight should definitely take that into consideration when having an alcoholic beverage."

## The least sinful drinks

Opt for Champagne or wine and avoid hard liquor. Though the liquors themselves may not be particularly caloric, they're often mixed with sugary fruit juices, cream and sodas.

## Minimize the damage

Enjoy a drink, but stick to one serving, and don't starve yourself. Eating a balanced meal prior to the family feast will make you less likely to overeat.

ELODIE NOEL, MWN

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Tradition

#### Chinese food on Christmas

Christmas doesn't mean homemade dinner and midnight mass for everyone. We rounded up a We rounded up a few restaurants open Christmas Eve and/or Day for those "celebrating" with Chinese food and a

way. It's serving Christmas Day lunch

#### Spicy Village

68 Forsyth St. #B spicyvillagenyc.com

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# Wyld on the burger trend

Alder. Chef Wylie Dufresne tells us about his new venture: a cheeseburger.

Alder has been doing sophisticated pub grub since it opened in March 2013, but it hasn't had a burger on the menu until this month.

Burgers were 2014's stunt food, especially the bun, with notable entries including the wildly faddish Ramen Burger at Ramen.Co, the less successful Rice Burger at Yonekichi, and the Pumpkin Spice Latte Burger at Umami Burger that we're not ashamed to say we didn't

But all this experimentation makes Alder's entry, a first on any menu by chef Wylie Dufresne, all the more surprising for its simplicity. The burger, dubbed with no lack of confidence The Burger, is a combination patty of chuck and brisket, with an umami kick of shio kombu (seaweed marinated in sake and tamari). It's topped with housemade



beer cheese and served on a potato roll for \$13.

We asked the chef to tell us a little more about

#### Why was this the right time for a burger?

"Ever since Alder's incep tion we've been riffing on pub food and trying to make it our own. We've



been having fun with pub cheese, pigs in a blanket and other bar foods, and it was time to bring that to a

#### Were you tempted to go out of the box with it?

'No. We wanted to keep it pretty straightforward, especially since it is only served at the bar and bar burgers do tend to be more simple. That's why there is no onion, tomato, etc. on there. But we did put a lot of thought into it; created our own blend of meat and made our own cheese in-house. The cheese is really the kicker!'

#### It's not the holiday season without

"A big glass of eggnog! I love eggnog and I certainly would not have it any other time of year. Eggnog is like Rudolph or Frosty: It doesn't really work in the summer."

#### What are you looking forward to next year?

"I'm excited to see what Dave Chang does with [Momofuku] Ko in 2015."



@thisiskis

# Don't spend Christmas with your pots and pans

Tomorrow is the big day! Get ready for presents, smiles, food, more food and cookies. No one wants to interrupt all that fun to put on an apron.

#### Rolf's

281 Third Ave. This place takes Christmas seriously, with garland and lights that hang so low they brush your head and off-the-charts eggnog and mulled wine. Rolf's is a German restaurant with every type of schnitzel and sausage (with a few seafood dishes if that's not your thing). It get crowded but it's worth the wait.

#### La Mela

167 Mulberry St. A great spot to bring relatives of any age, La Mela offers prix-fixe family style menus starting at \$25 for three courses or \$37 for four. I recommend going all-out to experience the pastas, meats and seafood.

#### Serafina

Four locations. For a fine-dining experience sure to please, try one of Serafina's homemade pastas, which start at \$14: I recommend the anocchi di momma and the tuna del principe. Choose the West 55th Street location and walk off your meal by seeing the Rockefeller Center







# Must see. Treehouse Theater goes out on a limb for 'The Interview'

It seems like all anyone wants for Christmas, and the only thing Santa won't leave in a single stocking, is Sony's Seth Rogen-James Franco political comedy "The Interview."

The movie, about an assassination plot against North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, was pulled after the studio was hacked (allegedly by North Korea) and bomb threats were made against theaters that would screen it, and there

are no definite plans to release it another way.

But a brave group of Upright Citizens Brigade comedians have gotten hold of a draft script and will stage a live reading at the Treehouse Theater (154 W. 29th St.) for one night only, Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. The event will be free, like the speech that many (including President Obama) lamented being censored by the humbled studio.

Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan. 20. Romance is highlighted and will brighten your day. Find an inventive way to show your partner you care.

Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb. 18. Enjoy the sense of camaraderie that develops during this festive season. Reflect on happy memories as you put the past behind you.

H Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. Don't contribute to negative rumors or gossip. If you keep a positive outlook and look for the good in others, you will enjoy popularity and friendships.

#### Aries | March 21-April 20.

Partnerships will be difficult if you aren't tolerant, patient and willing to give others the benefit of the doubt. Stick close to home.

Taurus | April 21-May 21. It's the time of year to forgive and forget. If you show kindness toward relatives you don't see eye to eye with, you will reassess the way you feel.

II Gemini | May 22-June 20. Needy or disgruntled people will get on your nerves. Don't try to please everyone. Instead, do something relaxing.

#### Gancer | June 21-July 22.

You can be the center of attention today. Make sure you don't exclude anyone. Those younger and older will crave the companionship you offer.

€ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. Your efforts will be rewarded if you brighten

someone's life. Affection is your ticket to a better personal life.

MP Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. Don't get caught in the middle of a family feud. Consider getting out of the house and spending time with friends.

#### △ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22.

Travel will spark your creativity and stimulate your imagination. Don't let unanticipated delays ruin your festive spirit.

M Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Your hard work will go to waste if someone else takes the credit. Maintain a close rapport with your superiors.

🗖 Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. Please pay close attention if you are traveling in unfamiliar places. Losing possessions will cause you difficulties, not to mention the cost. EUGENIA LAST

How to play

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puzzle with

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#### Best of 2014

Through the holidays, Metro takes a look at the issues important to letter writers in 2014. Whether it was gun violence, domestic violence, world conflicts — or cyclists! — Metro readers had a lot to say. Here are some excerpts:

#### Ebola

I am curious what this widespread Ebola panic is that's referred to. Here, the only time I hear about it is lighthearted comments among friends. Oh, yes, and the constant news reports about how hard it is to get and that preventive measures will make it spread faster. DIRK G. (OCT. 17)

If Kaci Hickox feels her human rights were violated, then she is evidently ignorant and needs to read the Constitution. The good nurse's right to the pursuit of happiness does not apply to threatening the health and safety of others, even if unintentionally or inadvertently, as her fellow citizens in Maine are letting her know. Ebola fears are new to the U.S., and we need

to learn as we go. ROBERT SIEGER (OCT. 30)

Kaci Hickox, like many selfless health care workers, put her own life on the line in order to help the victims of a massive tragedy halfway around the world, only to be rewarded by being treated like a cross between a barnyard animal and Typhoid Mary when she returned here. I am amazed by the mindless cowardice on display across the media landscape, especially in the light of real threats to our safety — like the inexcusable and preventable gun violence.

ROBERT TROMBETTA (NOV. 3)

Forced quarantine does have precedence going back to the 19th century, so yes, national health trumps the nurse's temporary discomfort. I should also note it's been suggested that someone can be contagious without displaying symptoms. SEAN ROOK (NOV. 3)

#### letters@metro.us



Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

#### Sudoku: Easy and hard

_								
				3		2	4	
	8	5			2			
		3			4		5	6
			1	7		5		2
		2		5		3		
5		7		2	9			
6	7		5			4		
			6			1	3	
	4	9		8				

6					5	9		
	5		1	8				2
3		1			2			
1					7		6	
9			4		8			1
	7		6					5
			2			5		3
5				1	3		7	
		7	5					8

#### Crossword

#### Across

- 1 Persist
- 5 Rain-delay rollout
- 9 Knock for a loop 14 Como — usted?
- 15 He directed Marlon
- 16 Condor's abode
- 17 - foot pole 18 Barely beats
- 19 -- and desist
- 20 Frisky pets
- 22 Fished with a net
- 24 "Nick of Time" singer 26 Oklahoma town
- 27 Ski run
- 30 Win a business contract
- 35 Leitmotif 36 Two-piece cookie
- 37 Art —
- 38 Louis XIV, e.g.
- 39 Renting out
- 42 Chainsaw target
- 43 Opera by Verdi
- 45 Volition
- 48 Yellow wildflower
- 50 Lethargic
- 51 Response to a rodent 52 Cousteau invention
- 54 Like some investors
- 58 Honor 62 Illinois town
- 63 Goddess's statue
- 46 For — (cheap)
- 11 Ph.D. exam 12 Belgian river 13 Tall stalk 21 Painter's device
- 23 Hazardous gas 25 Pond denizens

65 S&L offerings

69 Links champ Sam --

70 Watched carefully

71 Raise, as kids

Down

1 Drip

4 Hissy fit

2 — spumante

3 Proofer's word

5 Kind of racket

6 Elite (2 wds.)

7 Pants problem

8 Memoir topic

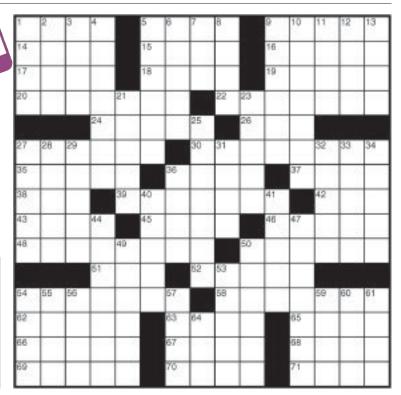
10 Away from the wind

9 False front

- 27 Subway hanger
- 28 Cantata performers
- 29 Alpine moppet
- 31 Simon or Armstrong 32 Further down

- 33 PC symbols
- 66 Hollandaise 34 Kind of bag 67 Glassmaker -- Lalique 36 Singer — Redding 68 Adamson's lioness
  - 40 Jedi allies
  - 41 Getups
  - 44 It was named for Vespucci 47 More lathered up
  - 49 Curbed, with "in"

  - 50 Fenced 53 Hag
  - 54 She preceded Mamie
  - 55 High spirits
  - 56 Flu symptom
  - 57 Charter
  - 59 Gardner of mystery
  - 60 Hombre's home
  - 61 Autocrat of yore 64 Susan of "L.A. Law"



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#### NHL

#### Rangers home for holidays

going into Tuesday night's game against the Capitals at MSG. New York will avoid travel over the next few days as their next game is at MSG Saturday against the Devils. They will be at Dallas Monday, at Florida on New Year's Eve and home against Buffalo on Jan. 3 before embarking on a West Coast road trip.

# Now what? Yankees begin post-Jeter era

MLB. MLB analyst Billy Ripken discusses a year of transition ahead for the Bronx Bombers.

It's not a rebuilding year for the Yankees but it's certainly a year of transition for New York. It'll feel strange in Tampa in March without one of the greatest and most popular Yankees of all time. Derek Jeter has retired and it will be odd not watching the iconic figure at shortstop. Jeter is gone and so is Bob Sheppard's voice. Alex Rodriguez, however, returns after sitting out a full season due to his much ballyhooed suspension. MLB analyst Billy Ripken speaks with Metro about the post-Jeter era, dealing with A-Rod and the myriad of question marks the Yankees face this season.

The Yankees are not just losing the face of New



#### York sports but also a first ballot Hall of Famer.

That's right on. There were better numbers guys with the Yankees but I always thought that Jeter was the best player during the last 20 years with the Yankees. He was so talented and he played the game hard, particularly in the post-season when he was unreal. It wasn't just at the plate. There was the flip against the A's in the 2001 ALDS. Opening Day

next year in the Bronx will be strange and sad without the "Captain" out there. He was an amazing player to watch.

And for something completely different, there is the A-Rod circus. How much of a distraction will he be and how much will he help? Wow, it'll be a crazy circus. It'll be a lot different for you New York media

types dealing with A-Rod

rather than Mr. Jeter. It'll be fascinating when it comes time to report to Tampa. I imagine that Alex will DH and play some at that other corner position, first base. How much he helps remains to be seen.

#### The pitching staff is riddled with questions. What do you expect from the starters?

I think CC Sabathia can come back and he should. He can be pretty good. But he's an if. Michael Pineda and Ivan Nova are ifs. I think (Masahiro) Tanaka will be fine. But there is so much uncertainty with that starting staff.

**SPORTS** 

#### Mark Teixeira's a big if

Correct. If he can only stay healthy, which he hasn't been able to do. If he does, I expect Tex to hit .250 with a lot of homers. But who knows with him?

#### It's been a year since Robbie Cano decided to take the money and run to Seattle. He would be the new face of the Yankees.

I don't get Cano's decision. Maybe his feelings got hurt. But can you imagine if he stayed? He would be Mr. Yankee right now. He could own New York but he's gone and it's difficult to know what this Yankee team is going to do and where it's going.

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